



LYMAN LOUIS LEMNITZER

1 October 1960 — 30 September 1962

Lyman Lemnitzer was born on 29 August 1899 in Honesdale, a small town in northeastern Pennsylvania. At his older brother's urging, he entered the US Military Academy, graduating in 1920. Over the next twenty years he served with coast artillery units, taught at West Point and the Coast Artillery School, and attended the Command and General Staff School and the Army War College.

In 1941, as the Army began to expand, Major Lemnitzer was transferred from an antiaircraft artillery brigade at Camp Stewart, Georgia, to the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff. There and in subsequent assignments with General Headquarters, US Army, and Headquarters, Army Ground Forces, he participated in the planning for the mobilization and training of the rapidly expanding wartime Army and for the projected Allied landings in North Africa. Promotions came rapidly, and by June 1942 Lemnitzer was a brigadier general.

Two months later he went to England as Commanding General of the 34th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade. Because of his familiarity with the plans for the upcoming North African operation, he was soon assigned to General Dwight Eisenhower's Allied Force Headquarters as Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, responsible for final preparations for Operation TORCH, the upcoming North African invasion. In October 1942 Lemnitzer accompanied General Mark Clark as second in command on a secret submarine mission to Algeria to meet with friendly French to enlist their assistance with the invasion. Lemnitzer won the Legion of Merit for his participation in this mission.

General Lyman L. Lemnitzer
United States Army



Brigadier General Lemnitzer, *center*, with Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, *left*, and General Sir Harold Alexander, *right*, at Anzio, Italy, January 1944.

In January 1943 Lemnitzer became Deputy Chief of Staff to Clark in Morocco, where he worked to organize the US Fifth Army. After resuming active command of his brigade, he led it through the Tunisian campaign and the early landing phases of the Sicily campaign.

Thereafter, Lemnitzer served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff to British General (later Field Marshal) Sir Harold Alexander, who was Commander in Chief, 15th Army Group and later Supreme Allied Com-

mander, Mediterranean. Lemnitzer, who was promoted to major general in 1944, also served as Chief of Staff to the Commanding General of the (US) Mediterranean Theater of Operations. In March 1945 he travelled incognito to Switzerland, where he met with German representatives and began discussions that resulted in the unconditional surrender of German forces in Italy and southern Austria.

After the war, Lemnitzer was the senior Army member of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He then

served for two years as Deputy Commandant of the National War College. Concurrently, he headed the US delegation to the meetings of the Military Committee of the Five Brussels Pact Powers in London, which led to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Late in 1949 Lemnitzer became the first Director of the Office of Military Assistance in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he was instrumental in setting up the US Military Assistance Program.

From December 1951 until July 1952, Lemnitzer commanded the 7th Infantry Division, leading it in the Korean War battles of Heartbreak Ridge and the Punch Bowl. Promoted to lieutenant general in August 1952, he became the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Research. In 1955 he assumed command of US Army Forces, Far East, and the Eighth US Army. Shortly thereafter, having received his fourth star, he became Commander in Chief of the United Nations and Far East Command and Governor of the Ryukyu Islands. In July 1957 he became Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and two years later its Chief of Staff. Appointed by President Eisenhower, Lemnitzer became the fourth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 October 1960.

Soon after John F. Kennedy became President in 1961, the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation caused him to question the judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A brigade of anti-communist exiles, trained and directed by the CIA, landed in Cuba at the Bay of Pigs but was quickly overwhelmed by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro's forces. President Kennedy believed that the Joint Chiefs had served him poorly by failing to review the CIA's plan thoroughly and express their own reservations forthrightly. The President directed that, henceforth, the Joint Chiefs must be "more than military men" and supply "dynamic and imaginative leadership" in Cold War operations.

General Lemnitzer considered the President's criticisms unfair. The Chiefs, he maintained, had never awarded the plan their "approval;" they simply had rendered an "appraisal" that, given surprise plus air supremacy, the brigade could establish itself ashore. Yet, without consulting the Joint Chiefs, President Kennedy had changed the landing site and cancelled a strike by the exiles' aircraft. Nevertheless, this military setback early in the Kennedy presidency damaged Lemnitzer's relationship with the new President.

In the other crises which came in quick succession in 1961, General Lemnitzer's recommendations for forceful responses met with mixed success. Friendly regimes in Southeast Asia were foundering. In Laos, by late April the communist Pathet Lao had advanced so rapidly that US-backed forces there seemed about to disintegrate. General Lemnitzer urged intervention by SEATO forces, not by the United States alone. Lemnitzer also favored a deployment of US combat forces to bolster the government of South Vietnam, which was struggling with a growing communist insurgency. President Kennedy decided against military intervention in Laos and, instead of deploying combat forces to South Vietnam, gradually increased the number of American advisers there.

When the USSR threatened to end the Western powers' access rights to Berlin, General Lemnitzer favored a major expansion of conventional forces to demonstrate US determination and allow a wide range of responses. The President agreed to an expansion but on a smaller scale. On 13 August 1961, when the communists began building a wall around West Berlin, the administration was so taken by surprise that Lemnitzer thought "everyone appeared to be hopeless, helpless, and harmless." He proposed that a 1600-man battle group be sent down the



Major General Lemnitzer, *right*, with General Matthew B. Ridgway, *left*, and General James A. Van Fleet, *center*, in Korea, January 1952.

Helmstedt-to-Berlin autobahn. Many of the President's civilian advisers assailed the proposal as needlessly provocative. President Kennedy, however, ruled in Lemnitzer's favor; the battle group reached Berlin without

trouble. During autumn, as the overall US buildup proceeded, the Soviets backed away from a confrontation over Berlin.

When Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara proposed putting the combat-



General Lemnitzer, *third from right*, in South Vietnam with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara; General Paul D. Harkins, Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam; and Major General Nguyen Khanh, Army, Republic of Vietnam, May 1962.

ready forces of the US Strategic Army Corps and the Air Force Tactical Air Command under a unified commander, the Chiefs were divided in their response. Lemnitzer, however, supported the McNamara initiative, and in 1961 the US Strike Command was created.

In response to Secretary McNamara's introduction of a new planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS), General Lemnitzer in June 1962 established his own

Special Studies Group to conduct analyses for the Joint Chiefs. This group played an increasingly important role in defining JCS positions.

There was a basic difference between Lemnitzer and the President over how best to respond to the anticipated increase in communist-sponsored "wars of national liberation." Kennedy had great confidence in the efficacy of special forces and other counterinsurgency capabilities. Lemnitzer believed that,

historically, regular forces had played a key role in defeating insurgencies. Believing that Lemnitzer was not sufficiently innovative to pursue the type of warfare most appropriate for the Third World, Kennedy did not appoint Lemnitzer to a second term as Chairman. Instead, the President nominated General Lemnitzer to the position of Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), where regular forces still played a paramount role.

General Lemnitzer's tenure as Chairman ended on 30 September 1962. He became

Commander in Chief of the US European Command (CINCEUR) on 1 November 1962 and SACEUR on 1 January 1963. He served as SACEUR until his retirement on 1 July 1969.

In retirement, Lemnitzer served in 1975 on the Commission on CIA Activities within the United States and from 1976 to 1978 on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. In 1987 President Ronald Reagan presented him the Medal of Freedom. General Lemnitzer died on 12 November 1988 in Washington, DC.

Lyman Louis Lemnitzer

General, USA

Promotions

Dates

Temporary

Permanent

2LT.		02 Jul 20
1LT.		09 Jun 25
CPT		01 Aug 35
MAJ		01 Jul 40
LTC	11 Dec 41	02 Jul 43
COL	11 Jun 42	
BG	25 Jun 42.	24 Jan 48
MG	27 May 44	29 Apr 52
LTG.	01 Aug 52	
GEN	25 Mar 55	

Assignments

Dates

From

To

Student, Coast Artillery School, Fort Monroe, VA	1920	1921
10th and 59th Coastal Artillery Regiments	1921	1926
Instructor, US Military Academy, West Point, NY	1926	1930
Student, Coast Artillery School, Fort Monroe, VA	1930	1931
Troop and Staff Officer, 60th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment	1931	1934
Instructor, US Military Academy, West Point, NY	1934	1935
Student, Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, KS	1935	1936
Instructor, Coast Artillery School, Fort Monroe, VA	1936	1939
Student, Army War College, Washington, DC	1939	1940
Battalion Commander and S-3, 70th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment	1940	1940
Executive Officer and S-3, 38th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade	1940	1941
Office of Assistant G-3, and then Assistant G-3, War Plans Division, War Department General Staff, Washington, DC	1941	1942
Chief of Plans Division, Army Ground Forces,		

Washington, DC	1942	1942
Assignments	Dates	
	From	To
Commanding General, 34th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade, Norfolk, VA and England (European Theater of Operations).	1942	1942
Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Allied Force Headquarters (European Theater of Operations: England and North Africa) and Commanding General, 34th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade	1942	1943
Deputy Chief of Staff, Fifth US Army, Commanding General, 34th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade (North Africa), and Antiaircraft Artillery Commander, Seventh Army (North Africa and Sicily).	1943	1944
Deputy Chief of Staff, 15th Army Group (later Allied Armies in Italy), and later Deputy Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean	1944	1945
Chief of Staff, Allied Forces Headquarters (Italy) and Headquarters, Mediterranean Theater of Operations, US Army (MTOUSA)	1945	1945
Army Member of Joint Strategic Survey Committee, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC	1945	1947
Deputy Commandant, National War College, Washington, DC	1947	1949
Director of Military Assistance, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC.	1949	1950
Commanding General, 11th Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY	1950	1951
Commanding General, 7th Infantry Division, Far East Command (FECOM), Korea	1951	1952
Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Research, Office, Chief of Staff, Army, Washington, DC.	1952	1955
Commanding General, Army Forces, Far East and Eighth Army.	1955	1955
Commander in Chief, Far East and United Nations Command	1955	1957
Vice Chief of Staff, US Army, Washington, DC.	1957	1959
Chief of Staff, US Army, Washington, DC.	1959	1960
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC.	1960	1962
Commander in Chief, US European Command and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (1963).	1962	1969

Principal US Military Decorations

Army Distinguished Service Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters)

Silver Star

Legion of Merit (Degree of Officer)

Legion of Merit